

## PROJECT SUPPLEMENT

### Include your project updates in the next *brIDGe Project Supplement*

The content in the *brIDGe Project Supplement* is based entirely on your submissions, so please send us information so that we can spread the word about your good work. Send any project

news you would like to share to [thebridge@rti.org](mailto:thebridge@rti.org), along with photos, if available. The next supplement is scheduled for February 2009, and we welcome your inputs in the meantime.

## GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

### Trash Talk in Armenia: Do Your Local Politicians Keep Your Community Clean?



*Residents sometimes dump trash in a local stream.*

When 48-year-old Anahit Ayvazyan gathered with 85 residents at the Vaik city hall on a Friday afternoon in mid-September to talk about trash collection, she had major complaints.

“Garbage disposal is dreadful, and it gets worse especially in the summer time when we have to burn or bury the garbage in our yard,” Ayvazyan told the council and the mayor’s staff. “Our street is located uphill, and the garbage truck is physically not capable of climbing up the hill. We haven’t seen the garbage truck for a very long time.”

To her surprise, she not only got answers but also received a handout announcing a new, weekly trash collection schedule due to start in September.

“We’ve never done this before,” said Volodya Khazaryan, a former teacher, now a pensioner, who attended the trash collection meeting. “Now we know that city authorities are serious about improving trash collection here.”

Located some 170 km south of the Armenian capital of Yerevan, Vaik’s 6,000 residents are grappling with a problem all municipalities, towns, and villages face, no matter how large or small—how to collect their trash and clean public spaces. Unlike economic development or education, the responsibility for doing the job lies not with the president, parliament, or even the *marzped* (the central government’s appointed regional governor), but solely with local politicians.

So why is it that so many communities across the country are literally trashed, with people forced to dispose of their own uncollected garbage, and trash piling up in parks and other public spaces?

Trash collection remains one of the highest priorities and the most problematic issues for local authorities, according to a poll conducted among 38 urban communities by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)–funded Armenia Local Government Program–Phase 3

(LGP 3). In another more recent public opinion survey conducted by the same organization, people expressed varying levels of satisfaction with their service, with the most discontent living in private houses—although they are also the least likely to pay garbage fees.

Part of the problem is a lack of adequate resources, especially in the smaller communities with limited budgets. Oftentimes, the money set aside for landscaping, street cleaning, and garbage collection is enough to cover only garbage, such as in Vaik. Outdated equipment makes it difficult for providers to offer good service, which makes it even harder to collect the monthly fees that local politicians are required to establish to pay for the trash collection.

But much of the problem can be attributed to, at best, poor planning and an unwillingness of politicians to assess and collect user fees and littering fines. At worst, graft is a potential risk, because the budgetary format allows expenditures to be obscured. Garbage collection is often included in a line item called “housing and utilities,” which can include a range of services, from water and landscaping to street cleaning and garbage removal in residential areas. That means the figure can range from 6 to 35 percent of the total budget, according to a 38-city budget analysis conducted by the LGP 3. Council members should be able

*continued*

## GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMIC GROWTH *(continued)*



*Participants listen to garbage collection information at a presentation in Vaik, Armenia.*

to see and show residents not only the breakdown of this line item, but also the justification or attachments to the budget.

By law, garbage collection, street cleaning, landscaping, and maintenance of public areas (parks, streets, squares) are managed and financed at the local level. Local politicians must choose whether they want to run the service themselves through the city or contract the job out to a private company. Either way, the city council is responsible for assessing user fees ranging from 50 to 200 Armenian drams (AMD) per month per person, negotiating the specific collection and cleaning schedule, and firing contractors who fail to perform and draw customer complaints.

Recent amendments to those laws also give local councils and the mayor the power to better monitor service delivery, including imposing fines on those who use the trash service without paying for it or those who litter in public areas.

“We wanted to make our message clear to our residents,” says Nune Petrossyan, a Vaik city councilor, who will be running for reelection. “The city is committed to improving public service delivery. We spent resources to obtain a new garbage truck and developed local regulations enabling us to control garbage disposal and impose fines and penalties on those residents who will litter our streets and parks or will not make their payments for the service.”

The biggest challenge for politicians is to ensure that fees are collected. The standard fee-collection rates are low throughout the country, according to garbage removal service providers in most

of the cities. This is due, sometimes, to mistrust: How do you know the collected fees will actually appear in the official reports of the garbage service provider?

The LGP 3 offers a tip for residents: People should be wary of cities that collect garbage fees without issuing double receipts. Some cities have also instituted the practice of paying garbage fees through the post office or a bank, eliminating the possibility that the garbage fee will go into someone’s pocket rather than the service provider’s coffers.

Ruzanna Khazaryan, executive director of a local education nongovernmental organization (NGO), said, “We were happy that when a USAID-funded Local Government Program came with money to spend in our community, the city authorities suggested garbage removal as the area that needs the most improvement.”

To aid communities with expensive equipment purchases, the LGP 3 has awarded 33 communities—including Vaik—the opportunity to co-purchase garbage trucks, with the cities agreeing to finance nearly one fifth of the cost.

There are other international donor programs that have come up with innovative cost-sharing solutions. One is the Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) project in Armavir, where six villages have combined resources to have a single garbage collection service. COAF helped to establish a private company, sponsored the purchase of a single garbage truck, and distributed garbage bins to all six communities. The garbage removal truck works one day in each community.

“Before we started this program, garbage removal had never been offered, not in the 50-plus years those communities had existed,” said Ovsanna Yeghoyan, COAF’s economic development program manager. “We wanted to improve the service to the villages, and also create local jobs.”

Aside from residential fees, the local authorities co-finance the service delivery from their village budgets, allocating each month 160 AMD for each resident.

“The residential fee collection rates range from 30 to 80 percent in villages, says Yeghoyan. “We plan to obtain more garbage trucks, to deliver better and more frequent services in the villages to improve our collection rate.”

Cities like Vaik are finding that open communication, education, and public participation are key elements to making a trash collection and landscaping service work.

Cities like Martuni, Noyemberyan, and Vaik have already started active community outreach programs to call on the public’s support to help keep streets clean, pay service fees on time, and place garbage in proper bins, in exchange for the city improving garbage collection. Efforts of the city authorities include involving local environmental NGOs to work with residents, printing and distributing brochures and leaflets, and commissioning TV programs and advertisements.

Vaik has also started a unique early education campaign in schools to help children get the message early that they play a part in keeping streets clean.

Ruzanna Khazaryan’s NGO sends students with cameras out to different neighborhoods to photograph the cleanliness level in public places. Those photos have been displayed during open council sessions, public hearings, and meetings at the mayor’s office. The photo monitoring project has had good results: First, the areas that were going to be monitored were cleaned together with resident efforts, and then these areas remained clean for some time. Another polluted public space was cleaned immediately after the mayor received the photos of the area.



## GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMIC GROWTH *(continued)*

Khazaryan and her staff also organize city cleaning events and offer education programs in classrooms for children as young as 5 years old.

Vaik authorities plan to conduct more city council meetings about garbage removal with residents. Hamlet Khachatryan, who runs the private company that collects Vaik's trash and cleans the streets, hopes that these efforts will build trust in his company and that citizens will be more willing to cooperate and make their payments. Now, his fee collection rate is at about 40 percent.

Ayvazyan's and her neighbors' problems, Khachatryan explained, resulted from being served with nothing but a "30-year-old, broken-down vehicle from the Soviet era."

The new garbage truck, paid for by USAID funds and a US\$8,000 contribution from the Vaik city budget, will enable him to work much faster and more effectively, he said.

"I had the opportunity to talk to our residents and explain how we operate, why we have problems, and how we are going to solve them," said Khachatryan after the meeting. "I really enjoyed this chance."

Local mayors and citizens are seeing the impact programs such as LGP 3 are making and are working toward using this success to improve their own local conditions as well as the look of their communities.

*Editor's note:* This article by Zara Chatinyan, LGP 3 team leader, originally appeared in a September 2008 election supplement published in all of Armenia's major newspapers and has been partially revised for the *brIDGe Project Supplement*.

### Armenia LGP 3's Co-financing Program a Major Success

The USAID co-financing program sponsored by RTI's Armenia LGP 3 has shown major success since it was launched in 2006. The co-financing program started as a cost-share demonstration in 5 of the program's 38 project cities. With a small allocation of US\$200,000,



*LGP 3 Chief of Party Sam Coxson showing USAID officials the Kapan kindergarten boiler room.*

the program supplied garbage trucks to three cities, purchased equipment for a heating project for a kindergarten to one city, and replaced water lines for apartment blocks in another.

The demonstration program was part of LGP 3's efforts to improve local municipal service delivery in Armenia. LGP 3 wanted to show USAID that such cost-share programs would enable a community not only to improve its services but also to collect sufficient revenues from the sale of services to pay all, or at least part, of the operational and maintenance expenses. Many Armenian communities complain that their services operate at a loss and must be substantially subsidized. This offers little incentive to provide the services.

Aparan was one of the communities that received a new garbage truck from LGP 3 to improve garbage pick-up service. Within the first 3 months, the pick-up service broke even—revenues collected covered the expenses, and the service was no longer operating at a loss.

LGP 3 also took steps to ensure the sustainability of the program. First, a new system of double receipts was installed to enable the city finance department to ensure that the cash collected was not pocketed by bill collectors. Next, a computerized billing and collection system, purchased by LGP 3, was installed and utilized. This system ensured a follow-up process to collect on past-due accounts.

Perhaps the most important step was creating a performance management



*Mayor Hovhannisyan of Mehgri and LGP 3 team leader Mais Vanoyan stand beside a new utility truck.*

program for each participating community. This was initiated by a telephone poll of at least 400 citizens, the majority of whom said they would be willing to pay for substantially improved service.

The program also required citizen involvement in service planning, such as designing routes and determining pick-up frequency and a new tariff structure. Mayors appointed citizen representatives to a working group to develop community clean-up outreach programs. Citizens were asked to refrain from leaving their garbage in the streets and other public places. The performance management program also provided a means for citizens to voice their opinions about the service. Noyemberyan and Vedi were also involved in the garbage collection cost-share demonstration program.

Another cost-share program, the provision of heating equipment for Kapan's kindergarten, enabled the municipality to increase the number of children attending school during the very cold winter months. By replacing a boiler and plumbing, the municipality of Kapan was able to improve service and increase some of its revenues to offset the cost of heating.

Nor Hachn implemented a water supply system improvement project as part of the cost-share demonstration. The majority of the previous water loss was either through leakage in the antiquated system or illegal use of the system. As a result of the improvements, usage declined from 5,562 cubic meters per day to 1,458 (a 74 percent reduction). Overall, this

*continued*

## GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMIC GROWTH *(continued)*



*"Before" and "after" photos of the Nor Hachn water line repair and replacement project in one apartment block.*



small improvement project provided a total of 15 percent cost savings to the city for the purchase of water. Additionally, LGP 3 provided a billing and collection system to increase the collection rate and further the recovery of the operations and maintenance costs of the water system.

Given the success of the demonstration program, USAID provided an additional US\$1.2 million to LGP 3 at the end of September 2007 under a co-financing arrangement. As before, participating communities provided 20 percent (plus their share of value-added tax) toward the cost of the equipment. Most communities chose garbage and utility trucks as their priority. However, Alaverdi chose to heat a music school and Artashat chose to install 1.4 km of new street lighting and to repair and replace lamps in the central downtown area.

To date, 21 of 30 garbage and utility trucks have been delivered to 20 of the communities. The balance, manufactured in Moscow by ZIL (Zavod Imeni Likhacheva), are en route to Armenia.

The program has not been without obstacles, however, such as dealing with Armenian customs and tax regulations. The recent conflict between Georgia and Russia also created problems. Shortly after the conflict began, Poti, the Georgian port of entry for the trucks delivered from Russia, was bombed and occupied by Russian troops. It was often not known when the trucks would arrive until they actually appeared at the Armenian distributor.

Despite these problems, USAID and LGP 3 have received many thanks from the people in these communities. Furthermore, these people see the need

to be involved, and in so doing, many communities have initiated clean-up campaigns. City councils are making investments in acquiring garbage bins to place in public areas and building collection areas to take advantage of the capability of these trucks.

USAID has indicated that this cost-share program is one of its more successful programs, serving as a catalyst for participating communities to improve other services and as a model for other communities. Already there are communities, not part of the LGP 3 list of project cities, purchasing their own equipment to improve services.

### Performance Management Introduced to Improve Quality of Municipal Services in Kosovo

Establishing an adequate performance measurement system for Kosovo municipalities is crucial to strengthening good governance and enabling central and local governments to improve monitoring and evaluation of the quality of services offered to their

citizens. Performance measurement mechanisms can significantly help Kosovo's process of decentralization.

RTI's EMI developed a study of international examples to help the Ministry of Local Government Administration (MLGA) develop a comprehensive performance measurement system for Kosovo municipalities by using best practices from the United States and various European countries. Furthermore, EMI developed a monitoring and municipal performance measurement concept paper outlining the policies required to initiate such a system. Among the policies are a focus on including local government representatives throughout the process and developing an easy-to-use evaluation scheme.

Sadri Ferati welcomed EMI's efforts to initiate a performance measurement system. He also authorized the establishment of a joint working group on performance measurement to head the implementation of a performance measurement system. The working group was composed of four municipal representatives, the AKM, the MLGA Department of Local Self-Government (with its divisions for Performance Measurement and Monitoring of Municipal Services), and EMI.

On September 25, EMI organized and facilitated the first meeting of the working group. This meeting marked the start of a very important process in local government in Kosovo by engaging both central and local government institutions in improving the performance of municipalities and MLGA's capabilities of measuring the quality instead of the quantity of services.

*From left to right: Sadri Ferati, minister of Local Government Administration; Ilire Agimi, Effective Municipalities Initiative (EMI) policy and research analyst; and Sazan Ibrahimi, executive director of Association of Kosovo Municipalities (AKM), attended the first coordination meeting of the performance measurement system joint working group.*



*continued*



## GOVERNANCE AND ECONOMIC GROWTH *(continued)*

It set the cornerstone for results-based development and for citizen-oriented policies of local governments.

Ferati officially opened the meeting and welcomed the start of such an important process. After a discussion with the working group, he declared the MLGA's

dedication to implement the working group's decisions. EMI presented the approach to establishing a municipal performance measurement system to the participants, elaborating on the concept of performance measurement, and providing several examples of its usage in other countries.

The working group discussions were very constructive, and the participants decided on a full list of municipal functions of Kosovo municipalities that should be measured in the next few years. The working group also proposed three priority functions that can start to be measured now.

## CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, MITIGATION, AND RECONSTRUCTION

### WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

#### Women's Leadership Training Award Ceremonies Held



*The Iraq Local Governance Program 2 (LGP 2) North region Women's Leadership Program (WLP) advisor presents a certificate to a training participant in Erbil.*

Between June 13 and July 3, the Iraq LGP WLP teams in the North region conducted a series of completion ceremonies for the first four WLP target groups, from Dahuk, Erbil, Kirkuk, and Sulaymaniyah provinces. The ceremonies marked the conclusion of 2–4 months of training for approximately 90 trainees on a myriad of topics encompassing issues related to women's empowerment in the public sector and women's rights. Training topics included gender, management, violence against women, effective leadership, and women's political participation.

#### Roundtable Discussion Conducted on the Personal Status Law

On August 24, a roundtable discussion on the Personal Status Law, a secular law originally passed in 1959 that provides

legal rights to women, took place in Dahuk. The event attracted more than 50 participants, representing women activists and advocates from the directorates of Municipalities, Food, Communication, Agriculture, Health, Education, Food Ration, and Electricity; the University of Dahuk; the Youth of Virgin Mary Church; and women-related NGOs and civil society organizations (CSOs).

The event received wide coverage from local media outlets. Radio Free Europe's Arabic coverage is available at: <http://www.iraqhurr.org/programs/correspondents/2008/08/20080824.asp#168306>.



*The LGP WLP coordinator speaks to local media on the impact of the roundtable and ways forward.*

#### Presentation Made on Effective Leadership

On August 25, the LGP Dahuk WLP team conducted a seminar on effective leadership to highlight the impact of women's participation in decision making in the community. Presentations by three guest speakers identified main obstacles faced by women leaders. Present were 53 participants representing the directorates of Municipalities, Food, Communication,

Agriculture, Health, Education, and Food Ration; the University of Dahuk; the Youth of Virgin Mary Church; the Women's Empowerment Center; NGOs; women activists; Kurdistan parliament members; and media.

#### Debate on the Personal Status Law Televised

On August 26 in Dahuk, the LGP WLP team organized a televised debate on women's rights and the Personal Status Law. The debate was meant to enhance public awareness on women's fundamental rights stipulated in the Personal Status Law.

The TV program presented the women's rights advocates' stance toward this law. The LGP WLP sponsored a Personal Status Law expert who was interviewed by Dahuk TV about the modifications proposed by the Iraqi Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) for the law.

Through dialogue and the exchange of best practices, the TV show emphasized the fundamental roles women must play to overcome entrenched social divisions and promote a positive impact on communities. Additionally, the TV show provided an opportunity for women to call in and ask the media to pursue programs through which they can get information about the important laws protecting women's rights.

*continued*

## CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, MITIGATION, AND RECONSTRUCTION *(continued)*

### Women's Leadership in Sustainable Development Conference Held



*Ashti H. Amin (right), Sulaymaniyah Provincial Council (PC) member, makes her keynote presentation.*

On August 27, the Iraq LGP 2 WLP conducted a regional conference on *Women's Leadership Role in Sustainable Development* for women activists in the public and private sectors of the four provinces of Dahuk, Erbil, Kirkuk, and Sulaymaniyah. The event was held in Erbil.

Women advocates from politics, business, NGOs, and grassroots organizations joined more than 115 participants from Dahuk, Erbil, Kirkuk, and Sulaymaniyah PCs. They represented the Kurdistan National Assembly's (KNA's) committee members; NGOs; the KRG ministries of Martyrs and Anfal Affairs, Planning, Health, Education, Agriculture, Roads and Bridges, Industry, Interior, Municipalities, Human Rights,

and Electricity; the Council of Ministers; political parties; and university academics.

The participants met to adopt long-term and sustainable strategies pertinent to gender equality and women's empowerment and development that would enhance the participation of women leaders in the public sector. The conference also facilitated the exchange of experiences on challenges faced by elected women local government leaders and strategies for strengthening their role and leadership capacities to effectively implement decentralized governance programs and increase women's role in government.

Pakhshan Zangana, head of the Women's Protection Committee of the KNA; Chinar Sa'ad Abdallah, minister of Martyrs and Anfal Affairs; and the LGP WLP coordinator gave the opening remarks. They were followed by four keynote speakers who made panel presentations: Sausan Mirani, director of the Regional Center for Administrative Development and director of training at the Ministry of Planning; Ashti H. Amin; Khaman Zrar, member of the KNA and a women's activist; and Avin K. Abdurrahman, Dahuk University academic and member of the Kurdistan Lawyers Syndicate.

During the afternoon session, participants were divided into four smaller groups for discussion. They adopted recommendations urging the development of a comprehensive set of policies and programs to increase women's participation in decision making, including conflict resolution.

The resolution also addressed the importance of generating commitments to promote the advancement of women and gender equality through awareness-raising campaigns.

The conference group discussions provided a dynamic venue for many issues of importance to women to be rigorously addressed and debated with their male counterparts. The women activists formulated 52 recommendations. The plan also acknowledged that sustainable development policies that do not involve women and men alike will not succeed in the long run.

The seminar was covered by 12 media outlets. The LGP WLP advisor was interviewed on the purpose and expected outcome of the seminar and on the type of questions participants focused on the most.

The LGP WLP team convened a meeting in September with a committee of seminar participants to follow up with recommendations and amendments made. The committee is composed of 10 women activists representing PCs, lawyers' syndicates, and women advocates from the public and private sectors.

### Sulaymaniyah Radio Airs Program on Women's Political Participation

The Iraq LGP 2 WLP in Sulaymaniyah sponsored and organized a two-part radio program on women's political participation that was broadcast by the Nawa Radio Station.

Two women from the Women's Committee of the Sulaymaniyah PC and a legal expert participated in the first part of the program on September 18. Participants discussed the significance of women's political participation in establishing a democratic system that promotes women's rights and status in the community. The radio program also provided a forum for informing the public about the activities and accomplishments of LGP's WLP to date.

Participants in the second part of the program, which aired on September 25,



*Attendees from different backgrounds and perspectives participated in the WLP conference.*

*continued*



## CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, MITIGATION, AND RECONSTRUCTION *(continued)*

were a legal expert and the editor-in-chief of *Tawar* magazine. They discussed the importance of changing the public's view concerning women's participation in the political arena and how to urge and empower women to play a major role in altering the prevalent cultural perspective of politics being a male-dominated area.

## GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM (GIS) AND PUBLIC UTILITIES

### APATOR Metering Training Held for Electrical Engineers and Technicians

The Iraq LGP Regional Reconstruction Team Utilities Team, in association with the APATOR Metering Company, conducted training sessions in Dahuk, Erbil, and Sulaymaniyah. Sixty-three engineers and technicians from the Ministry and Directorates of Electricity were trained on metering, billing, and collection. Held September 9–11, the APATOR system training used a mix of prepaid meters and one- and three-phase digital meters that are remotely read by hand-held computers or radio-based devices.

### Erbil GIS Training Conducted

The Iraq LGP Erbil GIS Team conducted two workshops in September and October. The first was a 2-day regional workshop held September 16–17 for 46 GIS Center technicians and engineers from the five North region governorates of Dahuk, Erbil, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Sulaymaniyah. The participants shared information on the latest in base map formation and defined challenges and deficiencies. They also proposed solutions and sketched plans for the next quarter's activities. Representatives from each of the North region governorates made a presentation that highlighted progress and problems. The participants had group discussions and raised comments and recommendations.



*Staff from the directorates of Municipalities and Ground Water, the Ministry of Planning, and the Property Registration Office in Erbil receiving GIS training.*

The Erbil GIS Team also conducted a 4-day introductory training on global positioning systems (GPS) and GIS October 20–23 for engineers, technicians, and staff from the directorates of Municipalities and Ground Water, the Ministry of Planning, and the Property Registration Office in Erbil. The event drew 30 participants (13 women and 17 men) who were trained on GPS functions and components for manipulating and displaying absolute point positioning and defining and drawing accurate maps.

### New Water Pump Stations Installed in Muthanna

With technical assistance from Indu Ram, Iraq LGP 2 senior agriculture advisor for the Muthanna Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), six new water pump stations were installed to replace 75-year-old stations for six agriculture cooperatives in Al Jobur tribal area (one of the most rural tribal areas of Muthanna Province). The PRT provided grant support through the Quick Response Fund. The ribbon-cutting ceremony on September 9 was attended by Bradley Lynch, team leader of the Muthanna PRT. In the ceremony, more than 100 farmers of Al Jobur tribal area were present. Adel Fadel, deputy team leader of the Muthanna PRT, and Indu were also present on the occasion.

The six pump stations will benefit more than 3,000 farmers, irrigate more than 6,178 acres of additional land, and double the crop intensity with the addition of new cash crops such as tomatoes, eggplant, okra, and green peas. The projects are expected to increase production of various crops to 5,000 tons per year. The project will benefit the area's farming community economically and generate rural employment by enabling the start-up of agro-based industries in the coming months.

All the cooperatives are contributing 15–25 percent of the project cost from their own resources, a first for Iraq.



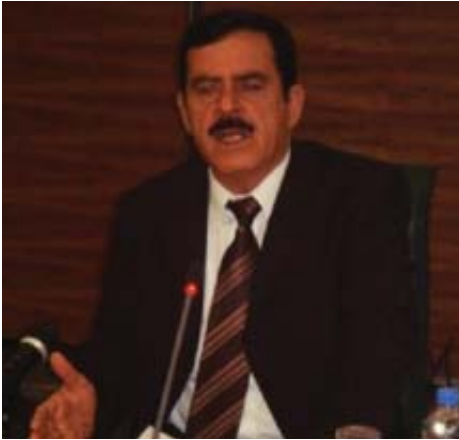
*The main sheikh of Al Jobur tribes (third from right), Bradley Lynch (second from right), and Indu Ram (far right) attend the water pump ribbon-cutting ceremony.*

*continued*

## CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, MITIGATION, AND RECONSTRUCTION *(continued)*

### BUDGETING AND FINANCE

#### Workshop on Strengthening the Management of Public Expenditures Conducted



*The KRG Deputy Minister of Finance, Taher Rashid, makes his opening remarks at the workshop.*

On August 26–27, the Iraq LGP 2 Public Finance team conducted a 2-day workshop on *Setting Up the Foundations for Strengthening Public Expenditure Management (PEM) in the Kurdistan Region*. This event was held in Erbil.

Senior planning and budgeting officials of 26 KRG ministries and financial institutions attended. Participants included the KRG deputy minister of finance; directors general (DGs); accounting, auditing, planning, and financial managers; accountants; and auditors of KRG ministries and Rafidain, Rashid, and central banks.

The workshop exposed participants to good practices in public expenditure management reform and the specific issues in undertaking reform for developing and postconflict countries. Participants considered how PEM reform could be implemented in the Kurdistan Region to improve policies, efficiency, transparency, and accountability and start sustainable progress toward international financial management standards.

In his opening remarks, Taher Rashid urged careful consideration of financial and budgeting procedures when the KRG passes a resolution. “To abide by the financial rules and policies, public servants should acquire more knowledge, and their technical capability should be increased to the next level,” he said.

Lewis Tatem, USAID team leader, emphasized that the KRG and the federal government have to “strive for a secure environment, provide a legal and regulatory framework that fosters sustainable market-driven development, and make significant investments in infrastructure and people.”

During the conference, Mark Silins, a public finance management expert, presented a comprehensive look at key components and international trends of PEM systems, public finance legal frameworks, budget preparation and execution, integration of performance-based budgeting into annual budgeting process, and decentralization of the fiscal system.

The workshop explored how to create an environment to initiate reform in the Kurdistan Region’s financial system to protect and use the region’s and country’s resources for public benefit. Silins shed light on issues facing the Kurdistan Region in PEM and legislative requirements to support reform in the region. The presentation provided examples, common problems, and best practices in PEM system reform implemented in Australia and some developing countries.

To realize the desired results, PEM reform must occur simultaneously and incrementally with reforms in other areas and sectors. It also needs political support, legislative reform, capacity building, training for all levels of public sector cadres, and improvement of institutional and organizational structures.

Silins concluded by listing the KRG’s challenges to form a decentralized financial system. The KRG has to decide on the proper legislative base, functions, roles, and responsibilities to be decentralized and the appropriate grant mechanism. It also needs to

cooperate with the federal government and all its regional local governments.

Participants commented on the need to reconsider and review the existing financial and budgeting systems and policies of the region to develop reform strategies and improve policies, which would lead to better resource management and sustainable economic growth.

The deputy finance minister, in his closing remarks, emphasized the necessity of getting full cooperation from the federal government to improve the KRG’s financial system. Rashid reiterated his request for LGP’s help in dealing with and solving the pitfalls in the KRG financial system. He also agreed to hold follow-up meetings with the LGP Public Finance Team for more technical assistance on PEM reform.

*Khabat* daily newspaper covered the workshop in its August 28 issue. The Kurdish report can be found at: <http://www.xebat.net/pdf/2954/x4.pdf>.

#### Ninewa Budget Preparation Workshop Held

On September 16–17, the Ninewa LGP Local Governance Team organized a technical assistance workshop on budget preparation and formulation in Ninewa. More than 23 managers and heads of departments of Ninewa Education and Electricity Distribution directorates attended. The event provided a forum to enhance local government staff’s capability on budget preparation milestones and to discuss the budget preparation framework. The main topics of discussion included roles and responsibilities of different levels of local government regarding budget formulation and preparation, as well as the difference between the operational and investment budgets.

Participants were acquainted with the roles and responsibilities of the PC and local councils (LCs) for budget preparation stipulated in the new Law of Governorates Not Incorporated into a Region. The relationship between the service directorates and LCs regarding budget preparation was also defined.



## CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, MITIGATION, AND RECONSTRUCTION *(continued)*

### First Conference on Governorates Accounting and Project Tracking Information System (GAPTIS) Organized

The GAPTIS Program held its first national users conference on *Building Tangible Accountability and Transparency* in Erbil on November 10–13. GAPTIS application users and government stakeholders from the provinces throughout Iraq attended this important event. It was the first opportunity to bring together all these users in one place to share information, showcase successful GAPTIS provinces, and build a nationwide community of GAPTIS users.

During the conference, keynote speakers addressed how GAPTIS delivered tangible accountability and transparency, not just empty speeches and promises, through a concrete accounting and project tracking system. For the first time, elected officials and other decision makers can monitor projects and contracting in their provinces. In addition, other sessions highlighted the outstanding GAPTIS work performed in selected provinces; discussed specific user needs in accounting, engineering, and contracting units; and reviewed the program's exciting new development plans for 2009.

## ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE

### Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Workshop Held



*Sulaymaniyah PC member giving comments after a presentation.*

The LGP 2 Sulaymaniyah Municipal and Urban Planning Team conducted a 2-day workshop on urban planning and EIAs in Sulaymaniyah on October 10–11.

The workshop provided training on urban planning concepts, principles, analytic methods, EIA processes, and use of GIS with EIAs. Seventy participants attended the event. Among them were the mayor of Sulaymaniyah Municipality, staff and directors from urban planning and service departments, representatives of the Sulaymaniyah PC and NGOs, and lecturers from the University of Sulaymaniyah and the Technical College.

The LGP 2 Sulaymaniyah program manager welcomed the participants and introduced Sheik Omer Mahwi, mayor of Sulaymaniyah Municipality, who gave the opening speech. The mayor noted the valuable role of Gregory Carmichael, senior municipal and urban planning advisor of the LGP Regional Reconstruction Team, in planning and conducting the workshop.

“Conducting such workshops and conferences are important for the Kurdistan Region, as the urban planning in the area is progressing and establishing strong relations among the three main cities of the region is essential,” Sheik Mahwi said.

Key presenters at the workshop included University of Sulaymaniyah academic Jabbar Mustafa; Gregory Carmichael; and David Urbia, LGP PRT Municipal and Urban Planning advisor of Ninewa.

There were breakout group sessions on the second day. At the end of the event, certificates of completion for Urban Planning/EIA were distributed to the attendees. Six media outlets covered the workshop. The workshop proceedings and outcome are posted at: <http://ku.aswataliraq.info/?p=100785>.

### Iraq LGP 2 Provides Livestock Vaccination in Muthanna



*Dr. Kareem AbdZahra Raheem (left), DG of Veterinary Services in Muthanna, and Indu Ram (second from left) assist sheep owners in the dipping during Vaccination Camp (Vet Camp).*

At Vet Camp on October 14, Indu Ram and Dr. Kareem AbdZahra Raheem looked a bit out of their element. Neither of them, agricultural experts from India and Iraq respectively, had ever “dipped” a sheep before. However, with the help of Hussein, an Iraqi farmer, the sheep received much-needed preventative care, courtesy of the PRT.

The Muthanna PRT is continuing a strong tradition of rural engagement with Muthanna's farmers by supporting the provincial government's efforts to rehabilitate the region's at-risk livestock population. Seventy-five percent of Muthanna's residents work in the agricultural sector, and the health and welfare of the province's livestock are of paramount importance to farmers and the economy of the region. Indu has worked tirelessly on agricultural issues in the province and is working closely with the DG's office to supplement the increasing effectiveness of the government.

“We have received medicine from Baghdad, but there is more livestock here than medicine. Without the help of the PRT, we would not be able to help these farmers and their flocks,” Dr. Raheem stated during Vet Camp. The DG also expressed his appreciation and gratitude for Indu's continuous support, guidance, and assistance in developing agriculture and animal husbandry in Muthanna.

*continued*

## CONFLICT MANAGEMENT, MITIGATION, AND RECONSTRUCTION *(continued)*

Indu and Aaron Snipe, PRT Muthanna acting team leader, also visited a site in rural Khidr where veterinary representatives from the provincial government conducted a series of vaccinations for livestock in the area. Previous veterinary inoculations sponsored by the PRT had been in partnership with the U.S. military. However, with the DG of Veterinary Services in command, the event was a sterling example of Iraqis taking responsibility to remedy the farming needs of their own community.

“Last time we came, the U.S. military physicians did the inoculating. But look now,” said Indu, “these are all Iraqi veterinarians, responding to the needs of the people.” During this event, more than 8,000 sheep and cattle owned by more than 100 livestock owners in the area were vaccinated for various diseases.

During this round of treatment, veterinarians injected livestock with vaccines for common seasonal diseases and administered oral treatments to the animals for internal parasites. Subsequent sheep dipping that day treated an entire flock of sheep, while the team observed and, with at least one sheep, helped. Under ideal conditions, sheep normally receive vaccinations twice a year, but until this PRT-sponsored initiative, the farmers of Khidr had not received vaccinations for their livestock in over 3 years.

Hundreds of thousands of Muthanna's farm animals are at risk of contracting myriad diseases. Foot-and-mouth disease and other maladies have wreaked havoc on rural flocks. The Ministry of Agriculture has increased the amount of immunizations to Muthanna, and the vaccination partnership between the government and the PRT is expected to decrease the sheep mortality rate by 80 percent.

Dr. Raheem expressed his gratitude to the PRT for all the support, assistance, and coordination in helping expand the province's vaccination program. Additionally, the mayor of Khidr—who has worked with the PRT on several projects—continues to be a strong supporter of the



*Indu Ram (left), Aaron Snipe (second from left), and Dr. Kareem AbdZahra Raheem (third from left) talk to sheep owners during the Vet Camp.*

rural farmers of his district and provided security support for the team's recent visit.

As the visit came to a close, everyone was smiling. In this forgotten corner of Iraq, where Muthanna's farmers struggle with so many challenges, the PRT's support of provincial efforts was paying large dividends. Before Snipe and Indu left, the farmers made one final request of the PRT: stay for lunch, and the farmers would slaughter a sheep in the team's honor. Although the team was unable to stay and break bread with their new friends that day, Snipe promised to return in November for another vaccination event and the team fully intends to take the farmers up on lunch then.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Economic Development Assessment (EDA) Initiative Summarizes Status of Progress

In 2007, the KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani requested USAID's assistance in preparing an EDA of seven sectors of the Kurdistan Region's economy—agriculture, banking, construction, extractive industries (crude oil, natural gas, and mining), information and communication technology, industry and trade, and tourism.

Iraq LGP 2's North region Economic Development Team undertook the assignment, which involved extensive sector analyses, including more than 300 interviews with KRG officials and private sector business executives from each of the seven sectors.

The Kurdistan Region has the potential to achieve accelerated economic development and growth if recommendations from the EDA are prioritized and implemented in a timely and professional manner.

The industry and trade and agriculture sectors, although damaged by recent conflict, are built on millennia-old foundations. A relative newcomer, the extractive industries sector, will tap into the growing global demand for crude oil, natural gas, and minerals. However, the region has to address several challenges common to other economic sectors that threaten to deny citizens economic prosperity.

First, the region lacks information and government transparency. The KRG must collect and disseminate key economic data and follow a transparent process for rules and regulations so that local businesspeople, as well as international investors, can make informed decisions that will grow and diversify the economy. By following fair but stringent international standards of transparency and accountability, the KRG can obtain international funding for the development projects recommended in the EDA report.

Second, the region lacks an effective banking and insurance system. The KRG must strive to create a modern, comprehensive, secure, and privately owned banking system that is connected to world institutions and full-service financial services and insurance industries.

Third is the lack of an education system to meet the demands of a progressive international free market economy. The KRG, in addition to fully funding basic education and expanding English language training, must develop Centers of Excellence in each of the sectors to make the education system more responsive to the market and local development needs.

The final factor is the lack of adequate infrastructure. The KRG should continue and even accelerate its investment in basic infrastructure upgrades.

Sector-specific findings and recommendations were also prepared for each of the seven sectors.



## HEALTH

### Malaria Early Epidemic Detection System (MEEDS) Established in Zanzibar

RTI and Selcom Wireless Ltd., a provider of short message service (SMS)-based products, services, and games in Tanzania, recently signed a memorandum of understanding to establish a MEEDS in Zanzibar.

The single most important factor in reducing the adverse impact of malaria epidemics is a timely response once the event is detected, with subsequent implementation of effective prevention and control measures to contain further transmission. The MEEDS aims to detect the early stages of an epidemic by measuring changes in the frequency and incidence rate of new malaria cases. For most systems, these changes in incidence are monitored at selected health facilities that provide a representative picture of the health-seeking behavior of the population. Through this approach, the MEEDS should detect malaria epidemics within 2 weeks of their onset.

The development and implementation of a MEEDS is a high priority for Zanzibar. Malaria epidemics are serious public health emergencies with tremendous potential for negative health and economic consequences. Zanzibar needs a timely, sensitive, specific, and manageable system to detect sudden increases in the transmission of *Plasmodium falciparum*, the most deadly of the parasites that

cause human malaria. In the absence of a MEEDS, progress in controlling the disease will become stagnant.

RTI and Selcom agreed to collaborate in establishing a MEEDS that is flexible and scalable to cover all 150 public and private health facilities in Zanzibar and Pemba Island. The partners will also train at least 2 health workers for each health facility, maintain the system, and generate reports for the health ministry.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention resident technical advisor for the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) in Tanzania has contributed technical guidance to the development and implantation of the MEEDS since its inception in early 2008. This technical input from PMI will continue as the Zanzibar Malaria Control Programme and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare work to continue scaling up the system through the RTI and Selcom partnership.

### RTI Guatemala Strategic Alliances for Social Investment (Alianzas) Program Launches Maternal-Child Health Communications Campaign

According to the National Maternal Child Health Survey 2002, high fertility rates (4.4 children per reproductive-aged women) and low use of contraception (43 percent) in Guatemala are largely due to lack of information and communication about maternal-child health issues.

Some topics remain taboo—and even censored—among Guatemalan society.

The USAID-funded *Alianzas*/Guatemala Program designed and launched an unprecedented mass-media communications campaign, titled *Campaña de Salud de la Mujer y la Niñez*. Supported by the private sector, the campaign aims to raise awareness about reproductive and maternal-child health issues and to foster a dialogue among Guatemalan society and within families. The campaign's messages and materials focus on three key points concerning family health

1. Commit to 6 months of exclusive breastfeeding
2. Allow 3 years between pregnancies
3. Avoid teen pregnancy

Beginning on October 28, TV and radio spots began airing nationwide, particularly in rural areas, for 12 weeks. Beginning in February 2009, video spots will air in public parks outside of Guatemala City, where locals congregate. Radio spots will also be broadcast in Mayan languages. Both TV and radio spots will be featured without institutional logos, allowing audiences to absorb the messages without imposing a sponsor bias that might otherwise decrease the campaign's effectiveness.

Partnering organizations include the following:

- Local TV and radio stations, which will contribute 50 percent of air time pro bono
- APROFAM, the largest NGO working on family planning and reproductive health
- Fundación Juan Bautista Gutierrez, established by Pollo Campero (a Guatemalan chain restaurant) and other entities
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- Bayer

After the campaign's initial 3-month period, media spots will be made available to partner agencies and the Government of Guatemala to promote their services, provide information, promote contraceptive sales, and support other program uses.

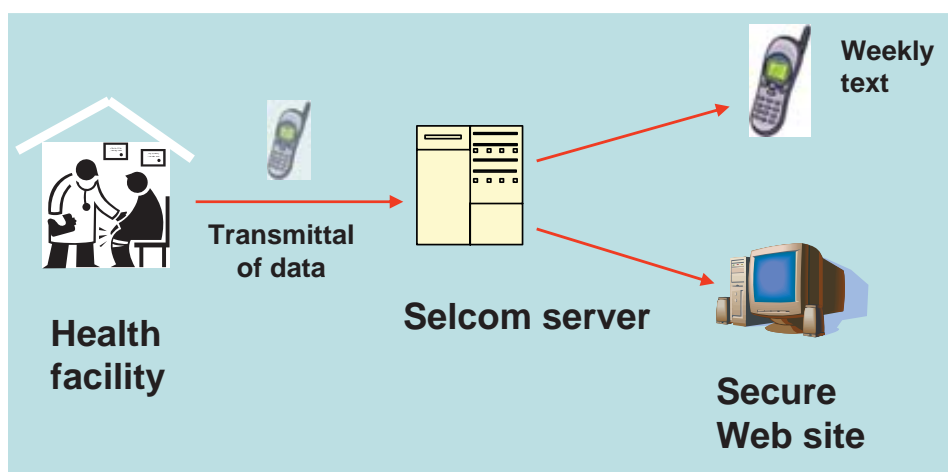


Diagram of a Zanzibar MEEDS via SMS.

continued

A campaign kickoff event on October 27 drew an estimated 120 officials and attendees representing USAID, the public and private sectors, and other donors. Key participants included Sandra Torres de Colom, first lady of Guatemala; Stephen G. McFarland, U.S. ambassador; Nadine Gassman, director of UNFPA; Carlos Bauer, director of APROFAM; Isabel de Bosch, president of the Fundación Juan Bautista Gutierrez; Tere Ligorria, chief of party of the *Alianzas*/Guatemala Program; and the *Alianzas*/Guatemala Program staff.

In her opening address, Tere discussed the campaign's importance and introduced the three TV spots. Representatives from UNFPA, APROFAM, Fundación Juan Bautista Gutierrez, and Bayer also discussed their interest in joining and supporting the campaign. Ambassador McFarland emphasized the U.S. Government's commitment to improving health services for all Guatemalan citizens, and First Lady Torres de Colom delivered the closing remarks.

The USAID/Guatemala Mission hailed the opening event and campaign launch as a success, particularly for its achievement in engaging both national and local buy-in and participation from the public and private sectors.

On October 29, a *Guatemala Times* article covering the kickoff event (<http://www.guatemala-times.com/health/you-a-your-family/479-guatemalas-government-and-private-sector-launch-campaign-for-womens-health.html>) ranked number two on Google News for English-language searches about Guatemala.

To view the TV spots produced for the campaign, go to:

- Birth spacing: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrXhJZg6mfl>
- Breastfeeding: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZClvsmR-NE>
- Teen pregnancy: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=77NnTFvvo60>

## Guidelines for Submissions to the brIDGe Project Supplement

**Text:** Whenever possible, please send your text submissions in an attachment (Word, PDF, .txt) rather than as a part of your e-mail message.

**Photos:** Whenever possible, please attach the **original** files to your e-mail when submitting photos to the *brIDGe Project Supplement*. While the *brIDGe Project Supplement* is able to use photos embedded in your documents or e-mails, the original files will produce the highest quality images. When taking digital photographs, set the camera to the highest possible resolution before taking photos.